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ABSTRACT

The following remarks were made by the U. S. Acting Assistant Secretary for Education: America has made progress in education and social justice but many problems (high school dropouts, jobs not commensurate with employee skills and abilities, and unsatisfying work) are far from solved. Current programs and Federal career education initiative have the potential to alleviate many of these problems. Three broad goals identified for career education activities are the improvement of: the quality of career choice, the individual's opportunity for career entry, and the individual's opportunity for career advancement. Title NINE of the Education Amendments of 1972, pertaining to the elimination of sex discrimination will result in many changes and will open educational opportunities to women now. All courses of study and classes must be open to all students, vocational schools will become coeducational, and the content of some courses will need adaptation to eliminate traditional sex biases. Moreover, significant changes will occur in physical education to provide money and facilities for equitable boys' and girls' athletic programs. Another major change required will involve the reexamination of the employment situation of women in our educational system (number of women in administration, lower salaries of women, and promotional practices). (EA)

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REMARKS

By

Charles B. Saunders, Jr.
Acting Assistant Secretary for Education
U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

I appreciate this opportunity to talk with you tonight. The work of the National Schools Committee for Economic Education is of great interest to me and to my colleagues in the Education Division in Washington. Your current program, "The American Way '76," is of special interest because it supplements so well our national priorities for the development of career education and the advancement of equal opportunity.

America is an education-oriented society, and our education system is undoubtedly one of the best and most accessible in the world. Most Americans believe that a good education, however they define that term, is not only worthwhile but necessary for a successful, satisfying life. As a result, we make every effort to provide our children with that "good education" -- a solid foundation in the 3 R's, a basic knowledge of their country's history, culture, and its place in the world. And we work further to ensure that educational opportunities at all levels are open to all of our citizens.

And we have made progress. The Office of Education now estimates that 75 percent of our young people graduate from high school, up from about 64 percent ten years ago. Over half

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of the high school graduates now continue on to colleges and universities. But we have also become more conscious that our democracy has not served all of its citizens equally in education and employment. Opportunities, and the rewards they bring, have been denied to many members of our society because of lack of education, lack of skill, prejudice, or simple poverty.

Again, we have made important progress toward social justice. We have seen passage of the Equal Pay Act, the Civil Rights Act, and the "Prohibition of Sex Discrimination" section of the Education Amendments of 1972. We have continued to desegregate our schools, and we have developed special programs to assist bilingual children, the handicapped, and other disadvantaged persons. And we have established such programs as the Basic Education Opportunity Grants to open the doors of postsecondary education to all who are qualified and who desire to further their education.

Despite such achievements, we all know that our problems are far from solved. About 900,000 students still drop out of high school each year without a saleable skill or even a definite plan to acquire one. Too many people, whatever their level of education, are unable to find jobs commensurate with their skills and abilities. Too many take work that they do not find

satisfying, despite the fact that work is a major part of one's life, and a primary source of personal reward and satisfaction.

Programs such as "The American Way '76" and the current career education initiatives supported by the Office of Education and the National Institute of Education have the potential to alleviate many of these problems. They can prepare our young people for the realities of the work world, and help them avoid situations similar to what many people are facing today. And these programs are needed now.

The Education Division of H.E.W. is actively continuing its support for the development of career education. Just recently an Office of Career Education was established in O.E. and one of their goals will be to refine and develop the concept of career education. Also, the budget for Fiscal Year 1975, recently sent to Congress by the President, requests $10 million for career education activities, in addition to some $43 million already being spent in this field by the Office of Education.

Last summer the various units of the Education Division collaborated to identify three broad goals for our career education activities. These are 1) To improve the quality of career choice, 2) To improve the individual's opportunity for entry into a career, and 3) To improve the individual's opportunity to progress in his or her career. We neeed to encourage every child to explore as many career options as possible, enabling each to discover his or her own interests and abilities.

And we need to provide the training necessary for each child to follow his interests and develop his abilities.

I hope that "The American Way '76" can be extremely effective in helping to achieve those goals. As I understand it, the thrust of your program is to teach, through a variety of curriculum materials, the basic values and principles underlying the free enterprise system. A better understanding of America's economic system can only increase each student's ability to succeed within that system, and to achieve those goals and rewards he or she is reaching for.

In particular, your efforts to teach the values and rewards of enterprise, responsibility, and productivity to students from minority groups could prove to be of great benefit. For these are the people to whom our free enterprise system has offered the fewest opportunities in the past. The poor, the non-white, and women have been denied the luxury of choice which is available to the white, the favored and the male -- in education and in employment.

Until several years ago, women had little protection against the discrimination they faced in schools and in jobs. Now, women are specifically covered by such laws as the Equal Pay Act and the Civil Rights Act. Many of you are undoubtedly familiar with these laws and their implications for you as employers.

Now there is another law on the books which will deeply affect the place of women in the American school system, as students and as employees. This law, which I mentioned earlier

in my remarks, is Title NINE of the Education Amendments of 1972. It states:

> No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal assistance....

We now expect the regulations for this law to be published this spring. You will find their impact extensive, for they will require that those educational opportunities we've been talking about tonight be opened to women now. The regulations will call for some difficult adjustments in our schools, not only in deeply held attitudes but in long entrenched practices. But if all of us here are truly dedicated to the goals of career education and to the principle of equal opportunity, we should not hesitate to put them into practice. So let me describe briefly some of the major areas included in Title NINE.

One obvious problem is segregation of the sexes in courses in schools. Under Title NINE all courses of study in public schools must be open to all students male and female. Where school systems maintain separate vocational schools for boys and girls, these schools will have to become coeducational. The segregation of boys and girls in vocational education usually results in significantly different curriculums, and in effect, limits career opportunities for students of both sexes.

For example, a study conducted in 1970 revealed very different course offerings at one city's separate trade high schools.

Students at the boys school could choose from over ten trade areas, including electronics, carpentry, drafting, and printing. Only four trade areas were offered at the girls school -- clothing, foods, beauty culture, and commercial art. In addition, it was found that the average expected wage for trades taught at the girls school was 47 percent lower than for the trades learned by the boys. So not only were the students channelled into traditonally male or female jobs, but the girls were guided into employment at lower income levels.

The same principles apply to individual classes. A witness testified in a New York case that she asked if her daughter could take a metal working or mechanics class, and was told there was no freedom of choice in such matters. Such a policy contradicts our efforts to provide greater educational and career opportunities for our children.

As a result of an open class policy, the content of some courses will need to be adapted to eliminate traditonal sex biases. Guidance counselors will need to reexamine the attitudes and practices which have automatically tracked students of one sex into certain job areas. Girls and boys must be encouraged to explore and cultivate their individual interests in an atmosphere of equal opportunity.

Another area where significant changes will be required at all levels of our education system is physical education. We include physical education classes and sports programs in our schools because Americans believe that physical activity is important to both physical and mental health. Sports are also

considered a valuable means of teaching fair play and teamwork, as well as how to shoot a basket or spike a volleyball. Athletics have traditionally been a male realm, yet there is no reason why these qualities should be any more desirable or admired in men than in women.

The difference between the money and facilities available for boys' and girls' athletic programs in elementary, secondary and postsecondary schools is grossly inequitable. A survey of the athletic programs in one school district a couple of years ago revealed that the district spent about $250,000 annually for boys programs, including interscholastic competition in seven sports. No real athletic program was provided for the girls, although they were allowed to enter interscholastic competition in one sport -- tennis. That effort cost the district less than $1,000 a year.

Situations such as this and the one at the trade high schools have slowly begun to improve, mostly at the insistence of local and national women's groups. Where such discriminatory practices still exist, Federal law now requires their elimination. The law also requires changes in current practices concerning the rights of married and pregnant students, and the administration of scholarship and student aid programs, which have often discriminated against women.

We must also reexamine the employment situation in our entire educational system. According to the National Education Association, the public schools employed almost 2 1/2 million full-time professional people last year, and women comprised

over 60 percent of that total. But women held only 13 1/2 percent of the positions as principals, only 11 1/2 percent of all positions as assistant, associate, or deputy superintendents, and only one-tenth of one percent of the superintendent positions.

Such statistics clearly demonstrate the inequities of education's promotional practices, practices which again contradict our goal of equal opportunity. Examples also abound in colleges and universities, where women are often paid lower salaries or denied promotions despite equal or better qualifications than their male colleagues.

We in the Education Division of H.E.W. have already begun examining our own attitudes and practices. Many of the recommendations of the Commissioner's Task force on the Impact of Office of Education Programs on Women have been accepted, and an Office of Women's Programs has been established to help implement these recommendations.

The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education noted last fall that "The largest unused supply of superior intelligence in the United States is found among women...." We cannot afford to deny ourselves or America the potential contribution of half our population, just as we have no right to deny women the opportunities, satisfactions, and rewards available to America's men.

A recent article in The American Scholar noted that, "Schools reflect, codify, and transmit social traditions and practices. They do not function to institute change." If that

is so, then the educational leaders assembled here tonight cannot claim to be leaders. I believe the challenge of educational leadership is to inspire needed change. We can wait until reforms are forced upon our schools by activist groups, by the Federal government, or by the courts -- or we can lead the effort to improve and equalize educational, career, and employment opportunities for all our citizens. Career education and programs such as "The American Way '76" can help us meet those leadership responsibilities.